



## **“I Treated You White’: Ulysses, gender and the visual culture of ‘race’”**

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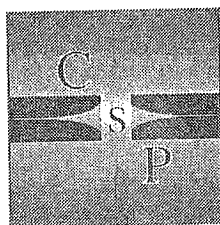
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Facing the Other:  
Interdisciplinary Studies on Race, Gender  
and Social Justice in Ireland

Edited by

Borbála Faragó and Moynagh Sullivan



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## CHAPTER TWO

### "I TREATED YOU WHITE": *ULYSSES*, GENDER AND THE VISUAL CULTURE OF "RACE"

SUZANNA CHAN

Throughout *Ulysses* its protagonist, Leopold Bloom<sup>8</sup> strains against the limits of gender and racial fabrications to transmogrify, astonishingly, into an array of personas. It is for both the novel's revelry in the instability of identity as a construction of language and the experimental manner in which this is achieved to reveal the textual basis of ideology, that *Ulysses* is celebrated for its anti-essentialism. *Ulysses* also records Dublin's visual and popular culture at the turn of the twentieth century, which it shows to have been steeped in racialized and racist representations, from which individuals form notions of other identities, and concurrently their own. Toni Morrison's study of how white-authored "Africanist" characters function to define the subjectivities of white protagonists in American literature considers the role of this dialectically created literary whiteness in the construction of what is described as "American" (Morrison 1992, 9). *Ulysses* similarly demonstrates both the dialectical construction of whiteness, and its function in the production of the category "Irish". This essay considers what *Ulysses* can tell us about the racialization both of visual culture and consciousness in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, and examines how Bloom's shape shifting can be qualified as an unsuccessful attempt to secure an unambiguous whiteness by recourse to a range of personas. Bloom also asserts his masculinity by way of the feminine, through projection into women's subjective spaces, their attempted patronage, and reversed gender roles. As his wife Molly observes, his Jewishness renders Bloom "not Irish enough" (Joyce 1986, 616); and is remarked through the relentless anti-Semitism he endures. His sense of identity remains confused and insecure from the experience of iniquitous ideologies of difference, in a novel where racism and anti-Semitism are observable as unjust, discriminatory practices.

In his study of race in Joyce's writing, Vincent Cheng argues that when he wrote that the "Celtic race" consisted of "old Celtic stock and the Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon and Norman races", Joyce eschewed notions of racial purity (Cheng 1995, 56, 74). Dyadic arguments of Anglo-Saxonism and Celticism are cast aside in the task Stephen Dedalus chooses in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, where he declares,

Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race (Joyce 2000, 275).

Stephen concludes with the entreaty: "Old Father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead" (Joyce 2000, 275-6), the youthful hyperbole of "the millionth time" sitting well with the grand task of forging the conscience of a race. Yet the double meaning of the word "forge", reiterated in "artificer", permits this to be equally understood as an act of counterfeit as much as worthy craft. His "old father, old artificer" might mentor Stephen's imminent adventures in conscience forging, but he would also subject the project to the limitations of a patriarchal imagination, thus Joyce disclaims compromised results as the Father's fault. Ambivalence also characterizes Joyce's treatment of race in *Ulysses*, which is always expressed in gendered terms. The notion of racial purity is disavowed, and while race itself remains undefined it is made known by its pernicious effects, and basis in language and representation.

For an understanding of racial discourse and Joyce's response to their implications, Cheng turns to L.P. Curtis's study of nineteenth-century political cartoons, indicating the importance of visual culture to ideologies of "race" simultaneously with the pitfalls of over-relying on visual studies since the satirical, propagandist and instantaneous economy of political caricature will necessarily yield crude samples of racial consciousness. Curtis argues that the simianizing caricatures published in the satirical journal *Punch* during the Land War and around Home Rule justified British rule by representing Irish nationalists as racially inferior through a mixture of pseudo-Darwinian theory and the absurdities that constituted nineteenth century thinking on race (Curtis 1971). He has in turn been criticised for downplaying the role of religion and class in constructing an alien identity for the Irish, and for missing the significance of how intermarriage between Saxon and Celt was considered beneficial conversion, rather than the miscegenation abhorred between whites and blacks (Foster 1993, 193). Charles Kingsley, who infamously described the Irish peasantry as "human chimpanzees", also had one of his heroes urge intermarriage with the Irish to revive the degenerate "South Saxon

race" (Gilley 1978, 86), indicating diverging conceptualizations of those categorised as black, and as of a white subgroup. Curtis admits that little is known about the consumers of *Punch* cartoons and what they thought of them, but Cheng contends that the apeman was the popular image of the Irishman by the 1860s (Cheng 1995, 31). He sees Joyce rejecting *Punch* cartoons, and the myriad of idealizing imagery produced by Irish political cartoonists from the 1860s to the First World War featuring lovely lily-white Erin idealized according to classical proportions, or more infrequently, handsome Pat the middle-class Irishman. Although Curtis observed that representations of "Negroes and other non-white peoples" were mostly more derogatory than those of the Irish (Curtis 1971, 15), Cheng conflates the Irish, Maoris, Sudanese, Hottentots, Chinese and Aborigines as primitivized others of a white European self, to argue that Joyce inverted the binary by using derogatory analogies in a positive manner to produce a "solidarity of the marginalised" (Cheng 1995, 26-7). *Ulysses* offers the complexities of attitudes to race in early twentieth-century Ireland, but evidences racism as much as any camaraderie-in-otherness. In "Wandering Rocks", the sight of a poster of Eugene Stratton grimacing "with thick niggerlips" turns Father Conmee's thoughts to the African missions and the "millions of black and brown and yellow souls" that remained un-baptised (Joyce 1986, 183). Here, Joyce combines some of the most influential forces for racist and anti-Semitic attitudes in Ireland: the Catholic Church, which represented Africans, Asians and other non-whites as abject objects of the pity and charity of Irish Catholics in collections for "black babies", and popular culture. Eugene Stratton was amongst the most popular white British "blackface" entertainers of the day and regularly toured Irish stages where "blackface" minstrelsy, with its racist, white-authored and performed stereotypes of antebellum slavery, had been a feature of Ireland's theatres, music halls and taverns since the 1830s (Riach 1973).

Further on, in "Cyclops", the nameless narrator remarks on a newspaper photograph of a lynched black man in Georgia,

A lot of Deadwood Dicks in slouch hats and they firing at a Sambo strung up in a tree with his tongue out and a bonfire under him. Gob, they ought to drown him in the sea after and electrocute and crucify him to make sure of their job (Joyce 1986, 269).

Despite that the photograph of the murdered man shows him hung, shot and burned, the narrator exhorts yet more violence on the dead body to effectively urge a "spirit murder", a term Patricia J. Williams uses to describe the case of a black civil rights worker stabbed thirty-nine times in

the United States (Williams in Gubar 1997, 56). The murder involved both a bodily killing and the murderer's attempt to kill his own mind's unyielding image, which for Susan Gubar is the white man's sense of culpability for injustices against African Americans (Gubar 1997, 56). Earlier in the same passage, the Citizen mentions the Galway Lynches, Joyce threading the Irish name bequeathed to racist murder to its photograph in the American South. In the same chapter the anti-Semitic Citizen, as Emer Nolan observes, demonstrates a derogation of British protocol rather than racism upon reading a newspaper feature about the visit of the Zulu King to England, in a scene where the men's sympathies lie with the African victims of imperialism (Nolan 1995, 103). Newspaper reports thus prompt responses that range from hatred to a sympathy which is nonetheless not quite a "solidarity of the marginalised", let alone a commitment to black liberation struggles.

### "The exotic, you see"

"Circe" is where Bloom's anxieties about "race" and gender clatter to the fore, unfettered by the liberal conscience that tempers his thinking about difference throughout the day. A morning's orientalist reverie of "dark caves of carpet shop, big man, Turko the terrible...", is quickly rationalized: "probably not a bit like it really. Kind of stuff you read..." (Joyce 1986, 47). In the early hours of the following morning, Bloom muses indulgently on models of Aztecs in the waxworks, "simple souls", and commends the thrift and industry of the "icecreamers and friers in the fish way" in Little Italy by the Coombe, despite that he suspects they eat kidnapped cats (Joyce 1986, 520). However, "Circe's" nocturne depicts Bloom yielding fully to his crises of identity by performing racialized, gendered differences, or stirred by an orientalism prevalent in popular culture. Bloom conjures the spectacle of Molly in Turkish costume with bejewelled, fettered feet intoning in Arabic (Joyce 1986, 359). Her pantomime camel emphasises the theatrical sources of "Circe's" orientalism analyzed by Cheryl Herr (Herr 1986, 96-135); which had also become a fashion trend by the first decade of the twentieth century in London and Paris. Ireland, without an indigenous fashion industry, was a market for commodities suffused with the glamour of exotic fantasies which promised an escape from dreariness. When Bloom meets Mrs Breen, who playfully threatens to tell Molly of his excursion into Nighttown's brothels and tenements, he reveals that she is in fact up for some

Slumming. The exotic, you see. Negro servants in livery too if she had money. Othello black brute. Eugene Stratton. Even the bones and cornerman at the Livermore christies. Bohee Brothers. Sweep for that matter.

(Tom and Sam Bohee, coloured coons in white duck suits, scarlet socks, upstarched Sambo chokers and large scarlet asters in their buttonholes leap out. Each has his banjo slung. Their paler smaller Negroid hands jingle the twingtwang wires. Flashing white kaffir eyes and tusks they rattle through a breakdown in clumsy clogs, twinging, singing, back to back, toe heel, heel toe, with smackfatclacking nigger lips) (Joyce 1986, 362).

Bloom claims a fascination for Nighttown on behalf of Molly, which becomes the exoticism of conjoined sexual and racial difference offered through figures of entertainment. He summons racist stereotypes of masculine, "blackness" on her behalf, Joyce conjuring a medley which includes Eugene Stratton whose poster had prompted Fr Connée's missionary meditations, and the Livermore Christies who were white "blackface" minstrels. However, the Bohee Brothers, as Joyce would have known, were black. Yet by clustering these figures together, he apparently refuses to distinguish between blacks, whites, and white-authored racist stereotypes of blackness, and reinforces the conflation with a chimneysweep to suggest soot-stained skin. Cheng insists that throughout *Ulysses*, Bloom does not distinguish between blacks and "blackface", reasoning that although Joyce himself was in familiar contact with black people in Paris, in the pages of the novel,

no distinction is (or can be) made between real blacks (since they were almost never experienced by Irish people) and blackface "negroes" by a culture in which the only available experience of "blackness" is the essentialized otherness of a stereotypes construction (Cheng 1995, 174-5).

Such was blackface minstrelsy's appeal and influence that according to Douglas C. Riach, countless Irish emigrants carried its "wholly inaccurate image of the Negro" to America (Riach 1973, 241). Minstrelsy presented the means to racialize consciousness and dialectically construe whiteness in Ireland, and Cheng rightly flags the influence of its racist stereotypes, although these were not, as he puts it, the "only available experience of blackness". Historian William Hart records that black people were present throughout Ireland in the late eighteenth century and Dublin had, after London, perhaps the largest population of people of African or East Asian descent of any European city (Hart 2003, 22). Black performers occasionally featured on Irish stages since before the 1800s, including the acclaimed

Irish-born singer Rachael Baptist, in a mutable climate later influenced by minstrelsy. Ira Aldridge, who performed in Belfast and Dublin in the 1820s and 1830s, had a wide repertoire but was restricted by audiences' preference for minstrelsy (Riach 1973, 240).

While Cheng assumes that the Bohee Brothers were white and describes them as a "pair of blackface 'christies'" (Cheng 1995, 174), Joyce actually gives us two configurations of brothers Bohee: the Bohee Brothers, and Tom and Sam Bohee, where "Sam Bo[hee]" belongs to the inventory of racist terms. However, the Bohee Brothers were George and James Bohee, celebrated banjoists of African American and Canadian descent born in New Brunswick. They arrived in Britain from America with Haverley's Coloured Minstrels in 1881 to form the renowned Bohee Brothers troupe, which included black and white musicians of both sexes. The Bohee Brothers regularly toured throughout the British Isles, playing in Dublin in Dan Lowrey's Music Hall and in the Gaiety in 1882 (Herr 1986, 185). Their repertoire featured "eccentric dance imitating roller skating", soloists and plantation acts, but they were most acclaimed for the brothers' virtuosity, which transported the banjo from the music halls to fashionable drawing room status (Reynolds 1929, 201–203). A reviewer in the *Bristol Times and Mirror*, on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 1888 effuses

[...] with such performers the Bohee Brothers (from whose entertainment there is an entire absence of everything unseemly) the banjo would not be out of place at social gatherings at the West-end [...] Their playing of the instrument which they have made their study was the most perfect ever [...] (Woolfe 2001).

Joyce presents animalistic, sexualized stereotypes in Tom and Sam Bohee as "flashing white kaffir eyes and tusks" (362), incorporating a reference to G. H. Chirgwin the "White-Eyed Kaffir", a famed white blackface performer. Then, after a chorus of "There's Someone in the House with Dina", Tom and Sam Bohee, "whisk black masks from raw babby faces: then, chuckling, chortling, trumming, twanging, they diddle diddle cakewalk dance away" (Joyce 1986, 362).

Although their surname and banjos link them to the Bohee Brothers, the identities of Tom and Sam Bohee are inconclusive. They are configured as racist stereotypes unmasking themselves, to invite two possible interpretations. For Cheryl Herr, though the term "babby" is a mask, "babby face" is the infantile and unsocialized condition (Herr 1986, 158). However, if like "babby", the "raw babby face" is another guise, Joyce confounds expectations of the revelation of "true" identities to present

readings that, in the absence of knowing whether his Bohee Brothers depict whites or blacks, oscillate from apprehending the author's expression of racism, to his mockery of essentialism. In Caryl Phillips's *Dancing in the Dark*, Bert Williams (1875–1922), the black Broadway star of "blackface" declares, "Nobody in America knows my real name and, if I can prevent it, nobody ever will" (Phillips 2005, up). Williams belonged to a successful generation of early twentieth-century black "blackface" performers who, according to Gubar, could have found an appropriation of white imitations of slave cultural forms both demeaning and empowering (Gubar 1997, 114). "Blackface" was a play with white projections of "blackness" and thus for black performers, a way of mimicking "whiteness," but it was a thin line between irony and rehearsing derogatory stereotypes for racist white audiences, many of whom were of the essentialist belief that "blackface" performed by whites required more skill. The white blackface minstrel Harry Reynolds claims "the public preferred the imitation nigger", contending that black performers "lacked the versatility and keen analytical sense of humour" of "clever white comedians" (Reynolds 1927, 165). Joyce on the one hand suggests that Tom and Sam Bohee's masks of "blackness" are performer's transferable gestures, yielding a generous reading that apprehends their unmasking as the cleavage between performer, white or black, and performance. On the other hand, they exit still embodying minstrelsy's diddling, chortling cakewalk with "raw babby faces" which can equally be said to infantilize the men. If they refer to the Bohee Brothers, this amounts to a conflation of stereotyped gestures with black bodies deprived of intellect and language, locked in the prison of appearances Fanon so influentially theorised, where "the Negro loves to jabber" and is therefore proposed as just a child (Fanon 1967, 27–35). Here Joyce leaves the potential for reading a reduction of masculinity in the image of "the black man" in racist representations, which produces the emasculated "boy" as the corollary of the oversexed "buck" stereotype (Gubar 1997, 170). Joyce features the sexualized stereotype in "Penelope", which is written as Molly's own monologue rather than Bloom's notion of what she fancies. She fantasizes about sampling a black man's penis, the body part upon which white men enviously fixate,

...that Mrs Langtry the Jersey lily the prince of Wales was in love with I suppose hes like the first man going the roads only for the name of a king theyre all made the one way only a black mans Id like to try... (Joyce 1986, 618).

Molly describes her lover Blazes Boylan's penis as "a tremendous big red brute of a thing", and a "crowbar" and likens him to a stallion (Joyce 1986, 611). Despite his extraordinary, animalistic prowess, she still muses that men, meaning white men, are the same in the face of their racial other. Molly's sexual curiosity is Joyce's ventriloquism of white masculine anxiety and envy of imagined black virility. Lola Young critiques how Fanon only theorized the black/white competition as between men for white women's affections (Young 1996, 95). In deferring, via Molly's sexual frustration, to the black man as sexualized stereotype, Joyce configures the same morphology of the black/white masculinist psychosexual interface. The "Jersey lily" and the black-man-as-penis are given proximity as stereotypes of masculine blackness and feminine whiteness. A flower symbolizes the paradox of an impossible but "natural" white femininity worthy of a prince's love, while Molly's embodiment of feminine whiteness is tenuous, disturbed on the one hand by her opaque genealogy, while simultaneously susceptible to the corruptible appeal of black male sexuality and reliant on a derogation of "blackness." Popular racisms recur in her thoughts. In another instance, she ridicules a child by likening its hair to that of blacks, "...the one they call budgers or something like a nigger with a shock of hair on it Jesusjack the child is black..." (Joyce 1986, 611).

The rhyme's expression of astonishment at the appearance of a black child harks to the notion of a lapse in the white mother's racial integrity. At such moments, Joyce's feminine character is forged sharply according to the imperatives of white patriarchy.

### "I treated you white"

Blank face. Virgin should say: or fingered only. Write something on it: page. If not what becomes of them? Decline, despair. Keeps them young. Even admire themselves. See. Play on her. Lip Blow. Body of a white woman, a flute alive. Blow gentle. Loud. Three holes, all women (Joyce 1986, 234).

Bloom likens the virgin to blank paper pending inscription, the white female body passive as a flute awaiting its musician, its orifices to be filled by an active male subject. These are objects upon which masculine culture is performed, and according to Joseph Valente are metaphors for Bloom's "generic woman", which allows him to project the lack intrinsic to his sexual position (Valente 1995, 213). "Woman" is determined on the basis of sexual difference, although Bloom's generic woman is further qualified as a whitely ideal. A site for displacement of lack, Bloom's "body of a

white woman" is also his projection of Judaism's characterization as feminine and submissive, combined with a denial of his own off-whiteness. Yet although his Jewishness denies him the whiteness of his fellow Dubliners, he affirms difference in his love for Molly, who considers herself of Irish, Spanish Moroccan-Sephardic heritage by way of Gibraltar (Davison 1996, 237). Bloom proudly refers to her as a dark "Spanish type" (Joyce 1986, 520), while she knows that he was initially attracted to her "on account of my being jewess looking after my mother" (Joyce 1986, 634). However, the possibilities of Molly's Moorish and Jewish heritages serve more to heighten her allure, rather than encumber or assign her with an unequivocal racial otherness. Unlike Bloom, she is not subjected to anti-Semitism, and admires the whiteness of her voluptuous body (Joyce 1986, 638). According to Brian Cheyette, the twin possibilities that he might be projecting a "Semitic otherness" onto Molly or captivated by her Jewishness, indicates the doubleness of her identity, which mirrors his own (Cheyette 1993, 231). Although he considers himself separated by both "creed" and "race" from the Irish Catholics who surround him, Bloom fails to cohere in a differential identity. In "Eumaeus", he tells Stephen of his riposte to the Citizen's anti-Semitism,

He Called me a jew [...] So I without deviating from the plain facts in the least told him his God, I mean Christ, was a jew too and all his family like me though in reality I'm not (Joyce 1986, 525).

"In reality I'm not", he adds, though he is constantly referred to as such. Bloom's preoccupation with his off-whiteness effloresces into a theatrics of race and gender when he is called to account for molesting the scullery maid Mary Driscoll. Mary accuses him of having made compromising suggestions, which, poor as she was, she saw fit to refuse. Bloom retorts,

I treated you white. I gave you mementoes, smart emerald garters far above your station. Incautiously, I took your part when you were accused of pilfering. There's a medium in all things. Play cricket (Joyce 1986, 376).

He reaches for white masculinity by cutting a cliché of middle-class Britishness, having already attempted to pass as Molly by claiming to be "the daughter of a most distinguished commander, [...] Majorgeneral Brian Tweedy, one of Britain's fighting men [...]" (Joyce 1986, 373). Babbling about sacrifices on the battlefields of Spion Kop and Bloemfontein, he emotes, "I did all a white man could" (ibid). And by, as he claims, presenting Mary, multiply marginalized as a working-class woman, with green trappings of femininity and championing her, Bloom



affirmed both her "whiteness" and his own. Undeterred, Mary describes how Bloom ambushed her "in the rear of the premises", but since she had "more respect for the scouringbrush", his attempt to sponsor her status is risibly pathetic (Joyce 1986, 376). She reveals, "I remonstrated with him, Your Lord, and he remarked: keep it quiet" (ibid). Laughter erupts and Bloom retreats into femininity to deliver a "bogus statement", recounted by the narrator, of his aim to reform by recovering "the memory of the past in a purely sisterly way", and returning to nature "as a purely domestic animal" (Joyce 1986, 376). Scenes of family life glimpsed whilst aboard a suburban Dublin train inspire his emasculated domestic turn as "an acclimatised Britisher", and visions of Irish and British national virtue are reconciled through commodity consumption, until the narrative dissolves into gibberish (Joyce 1986, 377).

The barrister resumes Bloom's defence, describing him as an infant, foreign immigrant trying to make good, despite that inherited traits compel him to alleged acts permissible in his native land of the Pharaoh. Bloom claims folly in his defence, being of Mongolian extraction. For Emer Nolan, this speech demonstrates the connotations of racism that inflect apparently enlightened scientific classifications (Nolan 1995, 126); yet it does much more besides. It advertises how distinct representational modes yield nonsensical definitions of racial identity. Pseudo-scientific rationalization becomes vaudeville, and Bloom changes into the uniform of a Southeast Asian sailor. Pigeon-toed and with a gesture of "oriental" deference to the court, he lilts, "Li li poo lil chile Blingee pigfoot evly night [...]" (Joyce 1986, 378), until laughed down. The barrister declares that Bloom treated Mary as his own daughter, and is "the whitest man I know", though temporarily in a trough having remortgaged property in Agendath Netaim (Joyce 1986, 378). Thus, a remarkable display of identity mutation has seen Bloom present himself as colonial white masculinity and feminized first as an acclimatized Britisher, then as an Egyptian national, a Mongolian sailor by way of Southeast Asia intoning pantomime "Chinese" and music hall minstrelsy, and remasculinized as a Zionist, all of which fails to exonerate him. Valente argues that the humour in "Circe's" politically vicious stereotypes stems from its "ontological underdetermination", which Joyce uses to solicit our compromised glee and suspension of values. The licence for uneasy amusement resides in the gap between Bloom's actual sufferance of racial, cultural, class, sexual and gender degradation, and his self-pitying fantasy (Valente 1995, 252). His pursuit of whiteness is made, above all, as a self-interested attempt to shoo Mary Driscoll's allegations away. The barrister's vindication of Bloom and his self-defence involve both

contradicting and appealing to the idealizing strategy of a whiteness that continues to elude him. Bloom's ultimate degradation, however, is achieved through gender role reversal.

The most extraordinary episode in his humiliation ensues in Bloom's imbroglia with the brothel keeper, Bella Cohen. "Circe" presents Foucault's "sociality of the brothel" (Foucault 1997, 376), where men converge and are linked to one another through the women they share. The sexual difference between Bloom and Cohen prevails over any cross-gender solidarity in Jewishness. To the clacking of her heels on the stairs, Bloom adopts a feminine persona, opining, "Colours affect women's characters, any they have. This black makes me sad" (Joyce 1986, 429). As Valente argues, Bloom projects into a sensual feminine realm and deprives women of self-awareness, while he can recognise the effect of black on his character (Valente 1995, 208). Bella, now renamed Bello, grinds one of her heels, "so glistening in their proud erectness" (433), into Bloom's neck and warns "(s)he'll" be forced to kiss torture instruments, "while the flutes play like the Nubian slave of old" (Joyce 1986, 434). Like Bella's speaking fan, observed by Enda Duffy in its "full role as repressive commodity" (Duffy 1994, 156), animated flutes replace the slave musician, a standard feature in the orientalist harem and bath scenes of nineteenth-century art. In the role of Bello, the commodity-bearing brothel madam swells to grotesque proportions as a cigar-smoking capitalist and rides Bloom who strains on all fours around the parlour. Their role reversal is consummated when Bello "bares his arm and plunges it elbow deep in Bloom's vulva" (Joyce 1986, 440). The arm is proffered to bidders to sniff, Bello inviting them to "touch shis points. Handle hrim" (ibid). Bloom is an animalized, feminized body at auction, though androgynous neologisms, "shis", "hrim", augur his return to masculinity. When they next meet, it is Bloom who dismisses Bella in animalizing terms, "mutton dressed as lamb" (Joyce 1986, 452). She retorts, "You're not game, in fact (her sowcunt barks) Fbhracht!", her vagina woofing her to abjection (ibid). She shrinks from phallic dominatrix into a shrewish brothel keeper who sets forth the night's tariff, and the economic basis of the now tame cavorting between the prostitutes, and Bloom, Stephen and Lynch, is emphasised by Stephen's fumbling for money and Zoe's declaration that she earns her living on the flat of her back (Joyce 1986, 453). For Duffy, this scene is where the subaltern woman speaks back by asserting herself as a paid worker. He proposes that the speaking woman is the text's gift to the "subaltern reader", a figure he adumbrates using a Northern Irish woman's account of coming to political awareness after being assaulted by men from her community (Duffy 1994, 163). However,



this turn to a category of female readership to affirm the text's postcolonial agency overlooks the crucial distinction between female autobiography and a male author writing gender. The women achieve speech after Bloom has regained a position of masculine mastery, having submitted his feminized body to penetration by a Bello endowed with phallic attributes. The shiny heel and fist are fetishes in a pornographic fantasy which restages heterosexual power relations, suppressing the horror of female sexual difference. In their return to conventional heterosexual identities Bella is re-oppressed as "nature", her speaking mouth competing with her barking vagina.

The instances of racism, misogyny, xenophobia and anti-Semitism that recur time and again in a single day set in Dublin a century ago, evidence their long history in Ireland. Despite being widely acknowledged as nonsense, ideologies of race invented to serve Western imperialism still prevail to support the interests of capitalism and national identity formulations. In unpacking the category white as a subordinating position, *Ulysses* speaks to Ireland in the present day, where whiteness remains privileged as the mythically transparent norm.

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